

NICE TIME 160M 21 ****

Yellowwood right supporting buttress to **Smalblaar ridge**,

Some years ago Tony Dick, Andy Alcock and I, Snort, walked up to Yellowwood to do Armageddon Time. We realized that the day was a high gravity day and instead snuck round the corner to do "No More Bells" 19. Always on the lookout for a new line I suggested to Tony we climb one of the lines on the supporting buttress just right of the Smalblaar ridge. He dismissed the idea saying that the angle was too easy and the rock too juggy. High up I had noticed an impressive looking headwall with a crack system splitting it and I was convinced by him that indeed this is a project to be deferred once the harder routes had all been climbed. We had a good time on No More Bells although I considered it a lot of effort to walk up there to do an easy 4 pitch route.

More recently, I, with Dark Horse and Dave Vallet, have been working on a route on the main amphitheatre which was called Half Time, but is now at Three Quarters and is a pitch or two from the top i.e 55m. To finish the route would include 3 options. The least savoury would be to finish up the grotty right corner, the second option would be to climb a corner crack system to the left and the final option to climb improbable overhanging aesthetic rock further left.

As I thought that as I was relatively unfit, my rotator cuff was impinging in my left shoulder, my DIP joint of my ring finger was having an arthritic flare up and I was climbing with Dave who lamented as to his own unfitness, we could race up the "easy" route to the right of Smalblaar and then rap down the last quarter of what would be called Full Time to check it out.

So in preparation for the putsch Margaret and I acceded to a dinner invitation at the Straughans. As they both have proper day jobs, **and**, the Wetspups athletics day only finished at 20h00, the multi-course dinner lubricated by a variety of alcoholic beverages kept us there till well after 10pm when I managed to sidle away to get some sleep.

Then Dave arrives early at 02h30 with an sms that he is the enemy at my gate! We had agreed to meet at 04h00!

Walking up YW in the dark is not really fun.

So around 07h00 we arrive at the base of the buttress and quickly realize that the climbing is much steeper than we perceived before. We pick the cleanest, easiest line and Dave leads off. He puts together a nice pitch at around grade 19. I then climb the next section that comes together like a jig saw puzzle at grade 20/21. Funky varied moves that start off a keyed in flake, pulls through a steep overlap and then finished up a long face with pro and holds unfolding just as you need them. The next pitch is a short scramble on lichen covered rock to a point where 3 lines start. I choose the steep chimney crack on the right and this delivers a stunning pitch (20) with crack climbing ending up in a cool classic and easy chimney.

We attain a ledge and high above us is the spectacular overhanging headwall. I am cowering in the shade of a corner when Dave sets off and climbs a steep, tricky crack system that entails marginal stemming moves at grade 21 and then after another short steep crack section we attain the base of the headwall.

We were stymied. To climb the headwall is a serious undertaking as it is undercut, wickedly overhanging and with a lack of decent holds and no obvious pro in places. So much for "easy and juggy". Our final pitch had actually ended just to the right of it and we could easily walk off. The headwall requires an inspection on top rope by us "really good mediocre" climbers and we left it for another day.

We then scooted around to rap down ***Fantastic Time*** and this went nicely until we tried to pull down the rope. Dave realized he had left the ropes to fall into a crack and they got stuck. So up he went 55m on prussics and he then flicked the ropes to the rap anchors on Down Time while I waited below getting frazzled in the hot sun. (I could scramble along a ledge system to the 2nd set of rap anchors on Down Time.)

We got down and then after a hasty cup of tea bombed down as I had to play at Faye's 40th.

I got to the party at 20h45 and ended up having a great time till around 01h00. And as if that was not enough Margaret and I proved Shakespeare wrong and continued partying at home for another hour or so.

Content and satisfied, I for the first time in my adult life, managed to sleep in till 11h00 on Sunday morning.

Nice Time (21)

START The route starts in the middle of the buttress supporting Smalblaar ridge on the right. Walk round from YW amphitheatre, round the large genderme, as if going to the descent gully and Chess Pieces. Scramble up the easiest obvious grassy ledge system to start at a crack (cairn in place.)

Pitch 1: 30m (19) Climb the crack to a blocky ledge 5m. Move left 2m and turn the overhang on the left and step right onto the face and climb up to a good stance. Belay to the right of the keyed in flake.

Pitch 2: 35m (20/21) Climb up carefully using the flake till standing on it. Pull through the overlap and attain easier ground. Traverse left to and then up on the left arête. Climb diagonally up with lay back moves to exit with a mantelshelf move on lichen covered rock. Belay on a small ledge system.

Pitch 3: 20m (18) Climb the crack on the left and scramble up to belay on a good ledge below the obvious chimney crack on the right.

Pitch 4: 45m (20) Climb the yellow- red rock to attain the chimney. Continue onto easier bushy terrain and belay on the left next to large blocks.

Pitch 5: 35m (21). Climb over the blocks and continue straight up steep cracks using stemming moves to a ledge. Belay here or continue up the crack system tending to the left to climb through the overlap. (18).

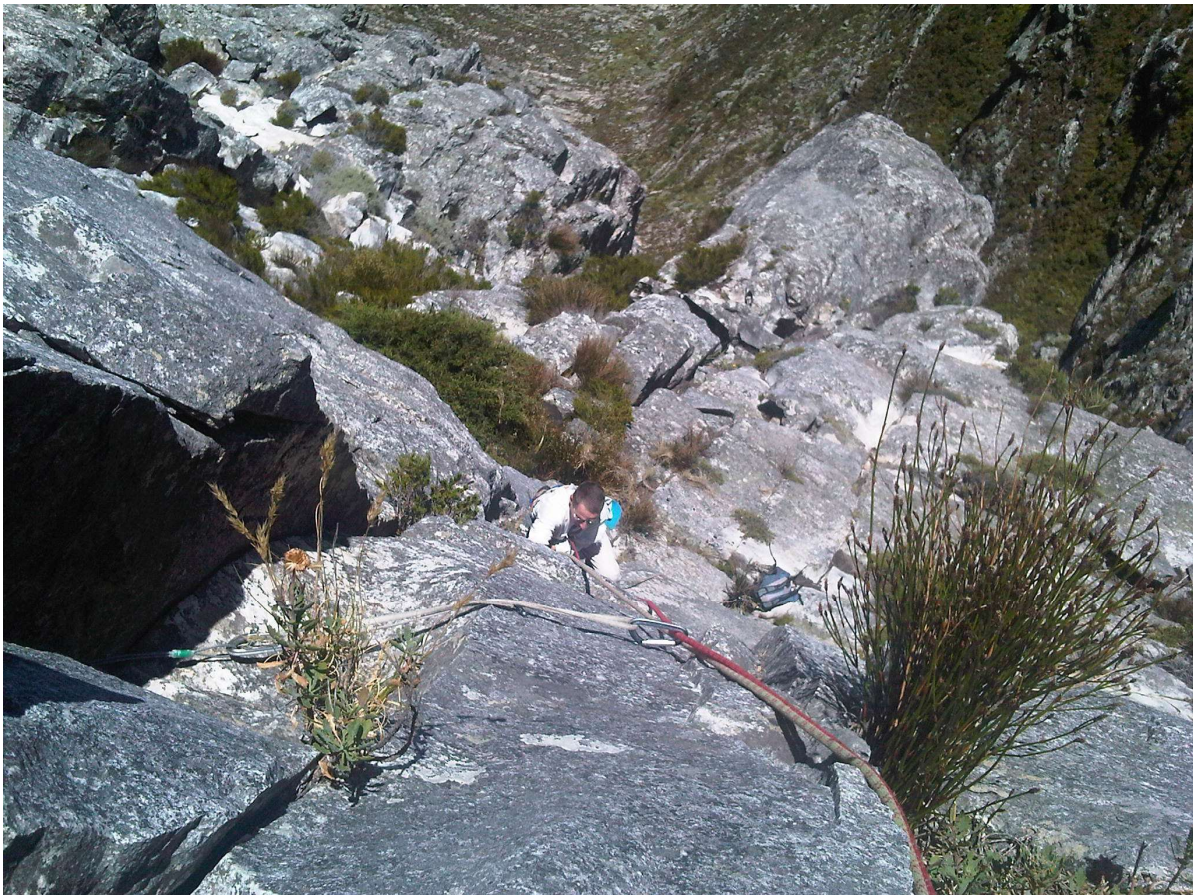
Scramble off right or have a go at the Headwall pitch on the left if you are really bold and strong.

First Ascent Charles Edelstein and Dave Vallet 5 February 2011

Descent. The [Chess Pieces gully](#) descent is just down to the right. It is probably quicker and easier to do the [Timerity Abseil](#) descent as it gets you to water. Walk east over the top and then along the sloping top to the Timerity Abseil (15 minutes).



Charles Edelstein (Snort) on the second pitch of Nice Time: Photo David Vallet Nov 2011



Charles Edelstein (Snort) on the fifth pitch of Nice Time: Photo David Vallet Nov 2011

TIME OUT 160m 21 ****

Start: The route is situated just to the right of **Nice Time** on the back-set buttress supporting **Smalbaar Ridge** on its west side. The **Descent Gulley** is to the right and further back. Walk up Yellowwood ravine to the centre of the base of the main Amphitheatre, and then contour right as if to go to **Smalbaar** or the **Chess Pieces**. The **Nice Time Buttress** comes into view as you round the corner of Smalbaar ridge.

Pitch 1: 50m (17) Start at cairn and find your way up on juggy weathered rock at the first small overhang, then up the recess to bypass the large overhang on the left. Continue to a good ledge under an overhang.

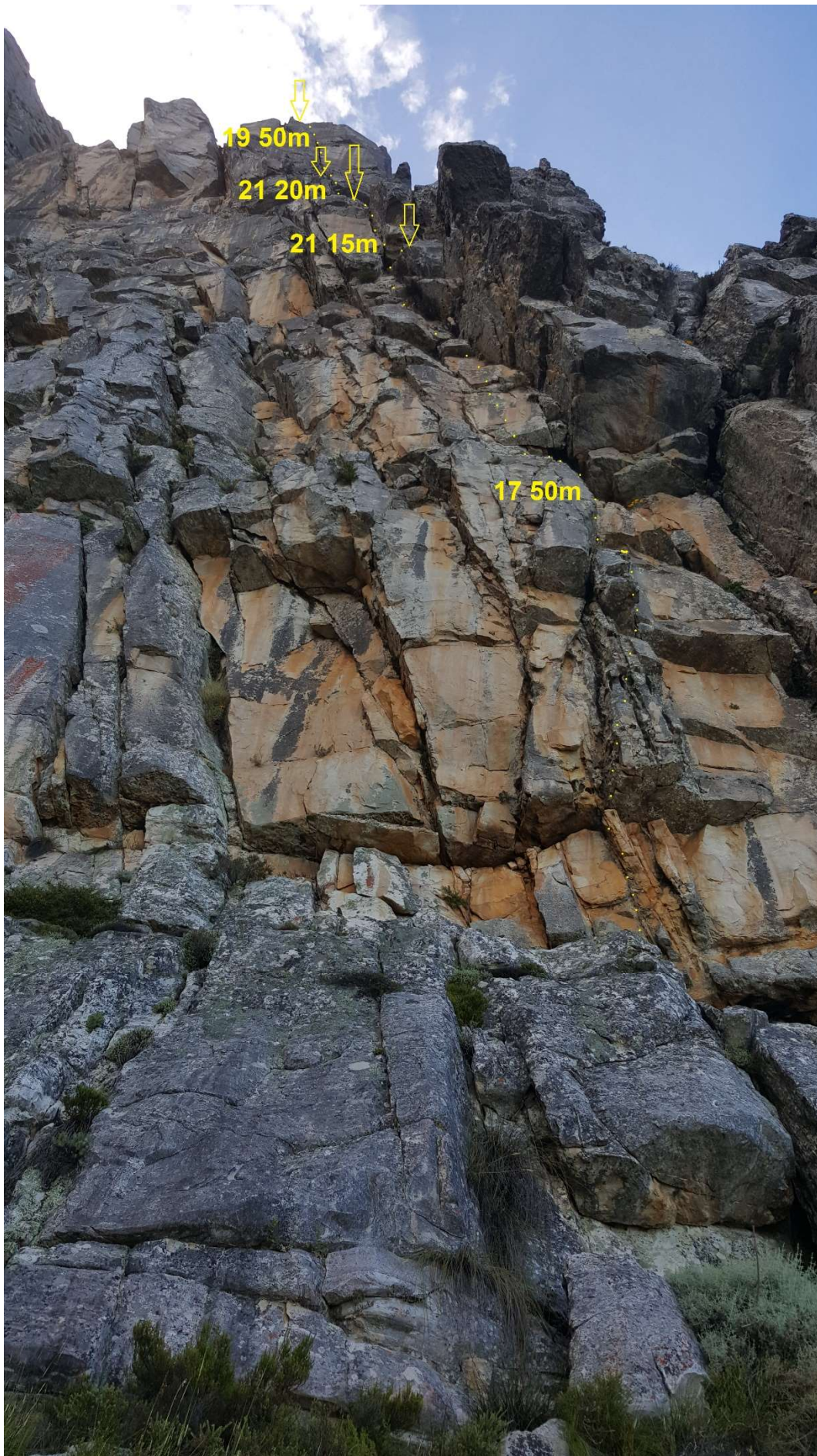
Pitch 2: 15m (21) Crank straight through to attain an off-width crack. Ideally have a Camelot 3.4 extra. Do a difficult move past the choc stone to a ledge.

Pitch 3: 20m (20) Climb directly up the grey recess on fins of rock slightly to the left to where it steepens and then do a strenuous lay-back move to the right. Climb more easily to a ledge.

Pitch 4: 50m (19) Do a crank on jugs to leave the ledge which is undercut and climb the water channel to stance on blocks. (***This pitch is very striking when viewed from Smalbaar ridge as one rounds the corner from the Amphitheatre. It has been climbed in the past by amongst others Tini Versfeld and Dave Birkett.***)

Pitch 5: 25m (17) Move to the left and down and find your way up the recess to the top.

Descent: The **descent gulley** is probably the quickest unless you have reason to go past the **Snotter camp** at the base of the **Divine Time Buttress**.



First Ascent: C Edelstein and Brent Russel December 15 2016



Brent Russel on the last pitch of Time Out: Photo C Edelstein

CHESS PIECES

THE CASTLE LEFT TURRET.



Castle left turret: Photo courtesy of Robert Zipplies

IN YOUR HONOUR 150m 24 ****(*)

The route follows a line up the left side of the “**The Castle**,” the grey tower immediately right of Smalblaar ridge.

Climb the first pitch of No More Bells up to the big ledge. The route starts off the left end of this ledge, just adjacent to the pleasantly cool descent gully. There are two obvious corner systems. “**In Your Honour**” takes the prominent right-hand recess. Start at the base of the right tending grey corner that has a large floating-shield half way up.

Pitch 1: 22m (19). Step up into the layback corner and climb up past a small roof to stance in a scoop below the floating-shield. Note the gear is slim at the stance!

Pitch 2: 33m (17). Step 1m right out of the scoop and continue up the layback/corner. Climb up past the right side of the floating-shield and into the steepening grove above. Balance over the ramp and then climb the chimney that splits a large block to the ledge above. NOTE: If you have 60m ropes, it is possible to combine the first two pitches to create a 55m pitch. It is also possible to retreat from here via either an abseil prong on the left side of the base of the chimney or it looks possible to traverse left along the ledge back into the descent gully.

Pitch 3: 16m (21). Step down and rail out right until directly under a peapod groove. Pull up into the groove (exciting) and exit right at the top. Round the corner, move a meter right then crank up on edges to access a small ledge below a roof. Stance Here.

Pitch 4: 23m (23). Climb the crack on the right edge of the roof. Pull up into the left facing corner above (Crux.) A swing left on the face above allows you access to the steepening corner above. Climb up to stance on a large vegetated ledge.

Pitch 5: 40m (24). NOTE small wires are essential here! Step left off the large ledge and back into the grove. Climb up and then balance left moving into the left of the two corners above. Climb up and left across the blank face and then back right and up under the small triangular roof. Pull over the roof and onto the apron. Hard and thin! Climb up and to the right of a brown water streak/scoop. Below the large roofs traverse left with feet at the level of the brown water scoop. Delicate footwork! Move left to stance on a large ledge, left of the big roofs. NOTE! The water-scoop might be wet after heavy rains!

Pitch 6: 20m (17). This final pitch starts off a block below a layback/water worn groove. Step off the block and climb the rib then the face to the top.

FA: Malcolm Gowans & Robert Zipplies; October 2009.

NO MORE BELLS 150m 19 *****

According to the editor of the MCSA journal in which the route description is published, a possibly similar route was opened by John Moss, Richard Smithers and Ed Marais in the ‘70s. The route was climbed and described by David Davies and Allan Ross in March 1992. No More Bells does indeed deserve the accolades it has received over the years and is a fine outing at the grade.

START: ‘No More Bells’ is on the first “**Chess Piece**” the “**Castle**” that comes into view when rounding Smalblaar ridge. It starts at the left facing corner marked by a cairn 40m or so past the descent gully past the huge chock-stone obstruction.

Pitch 1: 45m “F2” (15) Climb up from the cairn for 3m. Move right up the corner for 2m. Move right on to the white face with big Cape jugs to a big ledge.

Pitch 2: 45m “G1” (19) Walk 10m left to a cairn of stones. Climb the obvious crack to the left of a left facing recess. The crack runs out half way. Escape on to the face on small holds to a ledge.

Pitch 3 25m “G1” (19) Move to the right then up a crack. Step around the corner to a ledge below an overhang.

Pitch 4 45m “G1” (19) Climb up to the base of the roof and move left on flakes to a break through the roof. Once over the roof head out right to the edge of the buttress. Climb up a thin orange crack to a stance.

Pitch 5 45m “G1” (19) Climb the crack to a jamb crack, then through a small roof and up a series of cracks to the top.

New final pitch: 25m (20): The route previously ended on the prominent walk-off ledge. A new pitch was added to finish at the summit. This pitch heads up the white face using the slightly overhanging recess with a razor sharp vertical flake. At the first overlap head up left and then with balancy moves head out left to the break in the big roof above. Tricky and serious.

First Ascent final pitch: Hilton Davies, Bruce Daniel and Neil Havenga, November 2009.

First recorded ascent of **No More Bells**: Dave Davies and Allan Ross, March 1992

BELLS AND WHISTLES 125m 22 ****

START: Climb the first pitch of **No More Bells** up to the big ledge. From here the route follows an independent line close to the right edge of the buttress climbed by **No More Bells**. The route starts about 6m to the left of the massive gully dividing the two faces of the **Castle**, and 8m below and just right of two square, stepped roofs. Belay in front of a two meter wide detached flake.

Pitch 1: 36m, 19. Starting at the cairn, climb the crack leading up to righthand edge of the two stepped roofs. Break through leftwards (strenuous) using an undercling hold on the right-facing corner in the overhangs and up through the roofs. Continue up the crack, at one point choosing either a left or a right crack up to a semi-hanging stance on a few gargoyles. Stance at the right side of the buttress close to the edge of the gully just left of a small roof below the middle crack going through the overhanging rock.

Pitch 2: 20m, 19. The overhanging crack awaits an ascent. Climb the crack left of the overhanging crack using holds on left, then up and

rightwards with some strenuous moves towards the continuation of the right-hand crack (it is possible to step right earlier to an obvious undercling hold, and continue up the crack from there). Continue climbing this through overhanging rock up into easier terrain trending right. Stance on a series of small ledges on the arête.

Pitch 3: 20m, 20. Climb the easy cracks facing into the gully up to the left end of a long narrow roof, where you can break through using jams and/or laybacks (the No More Bells crux on pitch 4 is just around the corner to the left). Continue climbing for a few metres and stance (semi-hanging) 5m higher up close to the arête and about 4m below the next roof.

Pitch 4: 50m, 22. Climb up leftwards around the roof (airy move). Proceed up the crack via a series of rails, which includes a harder move. When the crack closes out, delicately step out right a few metres across a slabby face to a small left-facing corner. Pull up on thin holds (crux; and gear a little sparse). From here the grade eases and it is possible to scramble up to the finishing ledge (where No More Bells ends) just below the summit overhang.

Firs Ascent: Stephen Davis & Robert Zipplies; March 2010.

Descent: Walk to the east and descend via **Chess Piece Gulley** or **Timerity Abseil** if you intend to visit the water point.

GIRL NEXT DOOR 150M 24 ****

START: As for **“No More Bells”** first pitch about 40m right of the huge chock-stone at the base of the **Chess Piece Gulley**.

Pitch 1: 45m “F2” 17 Climb up from the cairn for 3m. Move right up the corner for 2m. Move right on to the white face with big Cape jugs to a big ledge. (Common with “No More Bells.”)

The route now continues roughly in the middle of the wall from the upper ledge, to the right of “No More Bells”. It crosses **“No More Bells”** near that route's second stance and climbs the rest of the wall between that route and **“In Your Honour”**. Right of centre there is a high, rectangular recess (yellow at the top), capped by a roof. On the face to the left of the recess, and right of a prominent left-facing corner, there are a number of vertical cracks. The route takes the middle crack, which blanks out about 15 meters up.

Pitch 2 36m, 19. Climb the crack and continue for a meter or two after it blanks out to reach a rail, then move right into cracks Continue up to a roof, pull through and then follow the right hand crack line. Avoid the slightly messy recessed part of the crack higher up by moving rightwards onto a very featured face. Stance at the top of this below the roof.

Pitch 3 : 40m, 21. Climb the break on the right side of the roof above and slightly left of the stance (Bells and Whistles climbs the crack 2 meters to the right) on good holds leading into a crack in a leftward facing corner, and then up easier ground onto a platform below the next steep section. Traverse left for 4 meters, up in a corner and then diagonally left on small holds to the rail below the steep rock. On the left, there is a yellow recess flanked by 2 parallel cracks. Climb these, moving right through the small roof. Follow the break above for about 8 meters to a small ledge. This pitch can be divided into two.

Pitch 3: 28m, 21. Climb the finger crack continuation of the break and then up easier ground above up to a ledge below the roofs. Traverse left for about 12 metres to the end of the large ledge.

Pitch 4: 30m, 24. From the left edge of the ledge, climb 3 meters up the break (shared with “In Your Honour” before it traverses left and up). Continue straight up through the slightly overhanging corner (strenuous). Follow the break, moving rightwards at about 15 meters and then straight up again through steep rock to stance on a small sloping ledge below where the wall steepens significantly, to the large roof at the top.

Pitch 5: 30m, 19. Make an airy rightward traverse in the good rail 1 meter above the ledge out to a good prong and continue traversing around the corner for about 3 meters. Climb the face above on a flake diagonally rightwards up to a rail and bush. Climb into the large crack on the right, up for 2 meters and then onto the face to the right of the large crack, which is climbed straight up to the top.

FA: Johann Lanz & Robert Zipplies; April 2011.

THE CASTLE, RIGHT TURRET

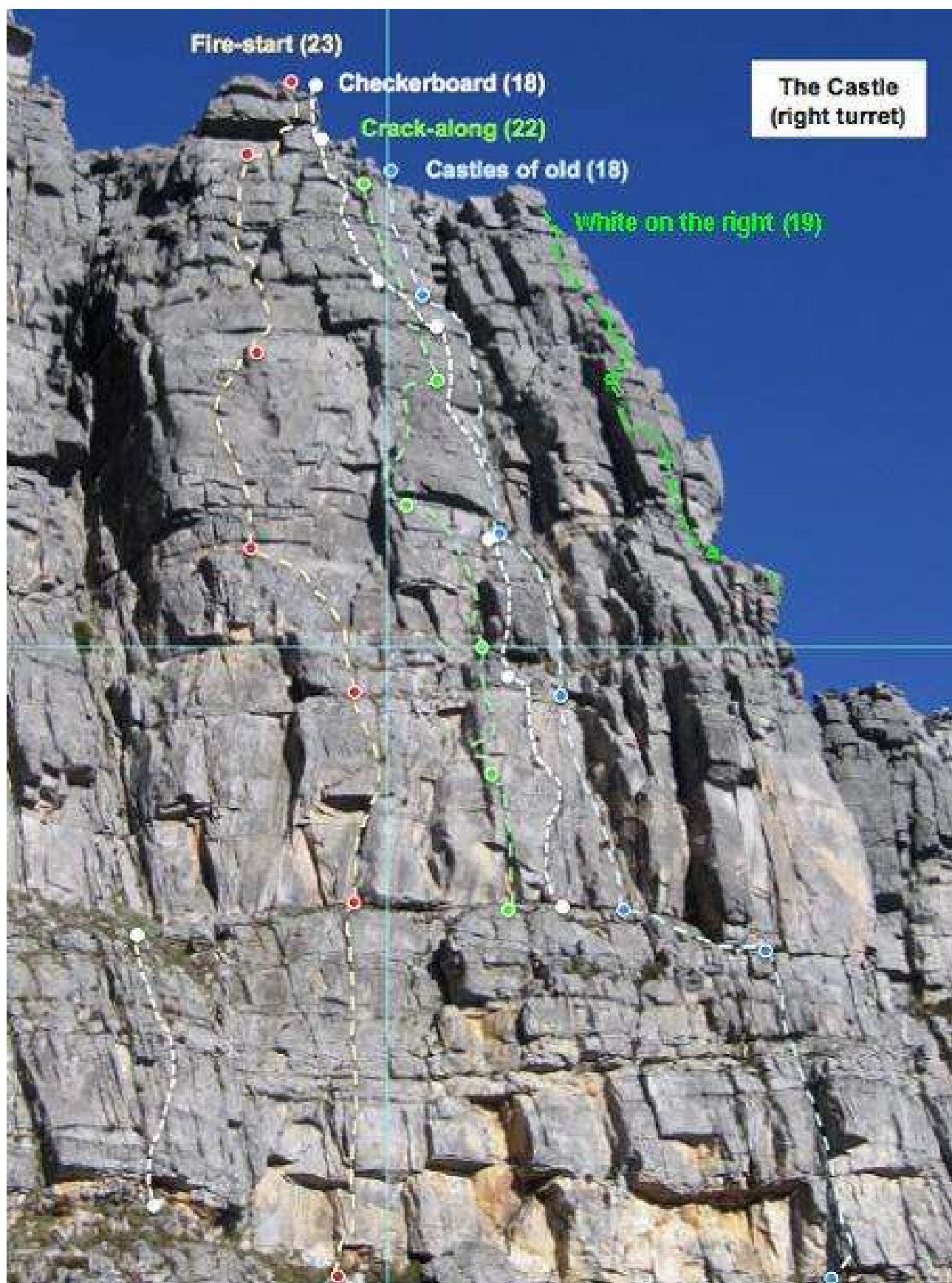


Photo and topos courtesy Rob Ziplies

FIRE START 150M 23 ****

Why Fire-start? Not only does this route have a strenuously fiery start, but after trundling a few loose blocks while exploring the route, we were more than a little astonished to watch a fire merrily crackling away about a hundred metres down the slope; and this just a few days after heavy rainfall. We spent a nervous ten minutes watching the fire before it fizzled out. If it had been summer, we would have had to watch our camping gear burn in the grassy bivvy below. Beware of trundling rocks!

START: about 50m to the right of the first pitch of **No More Bells** and about 6m left of a massive block lying below a series of brown overhangs. The route starts below a small, vegetated left-facing corner.

Pitch 1: 35m, 22. Climb up two meters and where it starts getting vegetated, move right, over the arête, onto the slab and via some thin moves up to a downward facing prong. Climb up and slightly left through the break in the roof (crux). Climb the grey face above and into the arching line of weakness then up to a big ledge.

Pitch 2 (off the big ledge): 35m, 23. Climb the hard layback crack in the left facing corner for about 8m. Pull into the open book below a triangular roof. Climb through right hand side of the roof and further up the crack. Move diagonally left onto a knobbly face and then up to a triangular vegetated ledge.

Pitch 3: 25m, 17. From the belay ledge move 2m up and slightly left onto another small ledge. Pull directly up past a small loose flake onto a second ledge in front of some large stacked flakes just left of a left-facing corner. Move right on the ledge and then climb up the flakes moving left toward the top of the upper flake. Traverse left and stance roughly in the middle of the ledge (cairn), below a long narrow roof.

Pitch 4: 45m, 20. Pull through the middle of three breaks in the small roof and climb straight up to another small roof. Pull through into a flaring crack. Continue up to a third roof where you move a metre left and up a juggy break. Tending slightly right, climb up the centre of the grey wall to a left-facing corner and (at about 40m) as that crack closes out traverse out a few metres right up a sloping crack onto a little belay ledge.

Pitch 5: 45m, 19. From the small stance climb up leftwards for 3 to 4 meters and up towards a narrow roof. Traverse right to access twin cracks. Climb up these onto the grey face above. Trend leftwards until you reach a big ledge. Climb the face just left of a left-facing corner trending left and then straight up through the open book above. Pull up onto a small ledge and then move higher to stance on a block about 5 meters below the massive rectangular overhang.

Pitch 6: 15m, 20. Climb up the left-facing open book up to the large roof. Using hand/fist jams (or the hidden rail in roof) rail right around the corner until below an off-width crack. Now you just have a few meters of strenuous squirming to putting Fire-start behind you. Enjoy.

FA: Malcolm Gowans & Rob Zipplies; October 2009.

CRACK-ALONG 135m; 22; ***(*)

Climb any first pitch up to the big ledge. The first pitch of **No More Bells** is described here. The route starts about 15m to the right of Fire-start's second pitch up a left-facing orange corner with a beautifully parallel, curved layback crack.

Pitch 1: 45m 15. Climb up from the cairn for 3m. Move right up the corner for 2m. Move right on to the white face with big Cape jugs to a big ledge.

Pitch 2: 15m, 22. Climb curved crack (crux moves) up into a small roof topped by a big hollow-sounding flake positioned vertically in the crack. Depending on your level of daring, either climb directly through the roof on the flake, or first traverse out right onto the face, up a few metres and then back into the crack above the flake. Climb a few more metres to a tiny stance on the left about 5 m below a small, narrow roof.

Pitch 3: 18m, 19. Climb to the left edge of the roof and traverse out left onto and up rounded holds for about 5 metres (protection sparse but available), before traversing right back onto the face (delicately move around the corner using pockets to place gear). Continue up crack to a sloped ledge on rounded holds. Move 2 metres right and climb up to the bottom left-hand corner of the massive dark grey block clear.

Pitch 4: 25m, 16. From belay climb up some bare-looking rock to two good holds, then reach through to a good hold at the bottom of a slightly flaring crack, climb the crack up to a little roof, where one can step out right onto a flake sticking out from the massive grey block. Climb up trending left to about 8 m below the long, narrow roof and then traverse to the far left to belay on top of long loose-looking blocks just below the roof.

Pitch 5: 25m, 21. Climb up left to the roof and pull through into the left-facing corner. Climb the layback crack for about 4m, before moving slightly right on thin holds over some blocks and upwards trending slightly rightwards to a long thin narrow ledge (sloping down leftwards).

Pitch 6: 50m, 18. Roughly in the middle of the long narrow belay ledge climb up a smooth looking face on thin holds and continue up until you a narrow roof. Climb through this roughly in the middle just left of a thin crack which offers good protection, and continue straight up, passing left of a blocky roof near the top.

FA: Robert Zipplies, Ian Durbach & Galeo Saintz; January 2010.

CHECKERBOARD 160M 19 ***

(The Castle, right turret)

225m 18; ****

Start: from the grassy ledge below the upper rock band and about 20m left of the big break that divides the Castle into two turrets.

Pitch1: 35m, 18. Pull up awkwardly through the left of 2 obvious overhanging cracks. Climb up to the right of the gully then right of the overhangs to a big ledge. Walk right along the big traverse ledge until 20m from the end of this ledge.

Pitch2: 45m, 17. Start at the cairn immediately right of a large freestanding flake. Step off the flake and pull up on jugs through small overhangs then left to thin crack in a corner. Climb the crack and move 2m left to a stance.

Pitch 3: 35m, 14. Climb up rounding the overhang to the left then up the juggy face tending right to stance below a thin crack just to left of the gully.

Pitch 4: 45m, 18. Climb 10m up the crack to a hand and foot rail. Move left a couple of metres and then up diagonally left to the break in the overhang. Climb the face above tending right to stance below a scoop.

Pitch 5: 10m, 12. Traverse left up through the scoop and walk left to stance below a big crack. Crack-a-long climbs the right face of this crack.

Pitch 6: 40m, 14. Climb up the face to the left of the crack diagonally up to the left then back to the edge to round the overhang. Move up and left for about 5m before heading up to stance on the corner below the last tower.

Pitch 7: 15m, 13. Climb the corner of the ridge and up wide crack to top.

FA: S. Adey, F. McIntosh, R. White; 12 February 2010

THE CASTLE 160M "F" GRADE

Chesspiece

A New Route on the De La Bat Ridges, Du Toit's Kloof

MICHAEL SCOTT

Chess is a game that has rightly stimulated and challenged man for thousands of years. The only way to succeed is through strategy and an ability to plan and think a number of moves in advance. Rock climbing, as many have likened it, is much akin to chess, especially the pioneering of a new route. On an unknown pitch, visualising three moves or so in advance is psychologically sound, and practical too, just as one 'sees' one's footsteps ahead when running down the mountain in order not to stumble.

Extending from Smalblaar Ridge to the right towards Du Toit's Peak there are a number of rock towers, in appearance resembling a row of chess pieces. The imagination required for this simile is enhanced when the heat haze is excessive! The towers themselves are composed of a checkerboard of slab-like, square faces of the best, hard, grey sandstone—very vertical, and very challenging!

On a crackling Saturday morning (November 5) the B.M.W. was parked wallowing in the bush next to the National Road, and Gabriel Athiros and I trekked up the ravine to the right of Yellowwood Ravine. Two hours' interesting going, first through a throttling liana jungle, then up a succession of clean, smooth waterfalls, took us to the base of the largest edifice—the double tower adjacent to Smalblaar.

We built a large beacon on a boulder underneath a bottomless crack cutting up the right-hand half of the tower, then Gabriel commented that an anti-tetanus injection in his arm the previous day had now rendered it useless. Looking for another break, we found nothing easier, the other towers were even undercut! In order not to waste the beacon, we turned back to stare at the rock, to contemplate for the allotted period of three minutes before making a move. Then followed a pull-up, an awkward bridging step and layaway grip around the edge—and progress! From a height of two pitches we had to decide where to continue as the most obvious lines would lead to trouble higher up. So we followed a semi-'dassie traverse' to the left to a high sloping wall liberally splattered with 'finger jugs'. Dangling off a two-man stance, with an uninviting crack above, I watched Gabriel discover that the wall had fewer grips than appeared at first sight.

It was now apparent that the key pitch lay ahead; the problem to keep the grade moderate. Lowering myself backwards off the stance, I traversed across a bulging face to a spectacular and exposed corner where a strenuous pull-up landed me next to a loose block on which I slapped a sling. A further obscure traverse led to a chimney

fitted with custom-tailored hand-jambs at the back.

Higher still, we met another crack with two barricading grass bulges to surmount. Deciding that this type of 'thrutching' should be left to hedgehogs, I peered around for escape. Nipping around the corner, my breath sucked in, I scanned the sheer face unrolling above for corrugations. Checkmate—not yet! Sharp little incut grips were spaced in regular procession up to a narrow overhang, and even there they continued, providing an exhilarating pull through.

On some of the most superb rock we have yet climbed, another three faces like this followed, boosting our excitement higher in pitch, pitch by pitch! One last overhang and we would castle to safety—to become kings of the castle. At the summit we were thrilled to note that, except for an unknown massif near Du Toit's Peak, we had climbed the highest of the De La Bat Ridges to date.

Technical Description

THE CASTLE

(1) 100 feet 'F inf.': Climb the crack, using the face on the right a bit higher, then swinging back to the left. Exit on the right near the top.

(2) 40 feet 'E': From the sloping ledge move up a small recess, where a tuft of grass hides a good handhold, to beneath a thin crack. Climb up and across the face on the left to a large ledge below a grassy chimney.

(3) 40 feet 'D': Traverse to the left through a low slit and climb up to a stance beneath a sloping wall with a small overhang at the top right-hand corner.

(4) 90 feet 'F inf.': Climb half-way up the face, then move to the right to a layback crack. Ascend the crack, move past some grass, swing out on to the face on the left, and then continue back across to the right to a two-man stance.

(5) 60 feet 'F inf.': Step down, traverse out towards Molenaarsberg, and then climb up on the corner. Traverse to the right along a low footrail to the chimney in the corner. Climb up by jamming and exit at the top to a stance on either side.

(6) 60 feet 'E': Scramble up to a higher stance next to an obvious crack up the front of the buttress. Climb the right-hand chimney and continue up using the face on the left until the crack closes in. Move to the left and climb up the face to a stance on a platform.

(7) 25 feet 'D': Move across to the right and climb up to a stance in the corner.

(8) 110 feet 'F inf.': Climb up and to the left into the chimney. Continue past two grass bulges to a handrail on the left-hand wall. Traverse out to the corner on the left and round on to the face, past a tiny recess. Ascend on fingertip grips to a finger-rail under the overhang. Move to the left and pull through on to the wall above. Alternatively traverse to the left for a few feet below the overhang, then climb up to the same pull-through point. The stance is a little higher.

(9) 50 feet 'F inf.': Continue up the face above, which involves a tricky move to stand on a sloping ramp.

(10) 70 feet 'E': Move to the left and climb up the crack or the face, pulling through an overhang block at the top of the chimney. Scramble to the summit—the sporting way includes a noticeable twisted crack up on the high corner. To descend slog for half an hour across the back of the ridges towards Worcester and an hour's going down De La Bat Ravine ('A') leads back to the road.

CASTLES OF OLD 160M; 18 ***

This is a composite route consisting of two or three pitches of a route called **The Castle** first climbed by Mike Scott and Gabriel Athiros (1966 MCSA journal), and the upper pitches of a route climbed by John Moss and Richard Smithers in about 1967, which was not written up. One or two of the lower pitches are not of the greatest quality, the others are excellent.

START: Walk past start of **No More Bells** and **Fire-start** and past two or three massive blocks. The route begins just past the orange wall and overhang, where there is an obvious break in the rock (somewhat chossy). There is a big cairn on top of a big rock.

Pitch 1: 40m, 17. Make a difficult step up and around the fins to the right. Climb the somewhat vegetated crack up past a roof on the right. Skirt a small roof on its left higher up. At the next roof stay right. Continue to a big ledge just below a big long black face topped by a square overhang. Belay here.

Scramble leftwards for about 20m to the second of the big left-facing corners (about 10m to the right of the **Crack-along** corner).

Pitch 2: 30m, 16. Climb the knobbly face just a few meters left of the left facing corner, trend a little left and straight up, either in the crack on the far right or in a slightly cleaner crack a little more left from the corner. Stance at obvious ledge.

Pitch 3: 30m, 18. Pull through a hard overhanging move (crux) and then climb up (some loose-looking blocks) to stance on a small ledge about 3m below the right-hand corner of the long narrow roof.

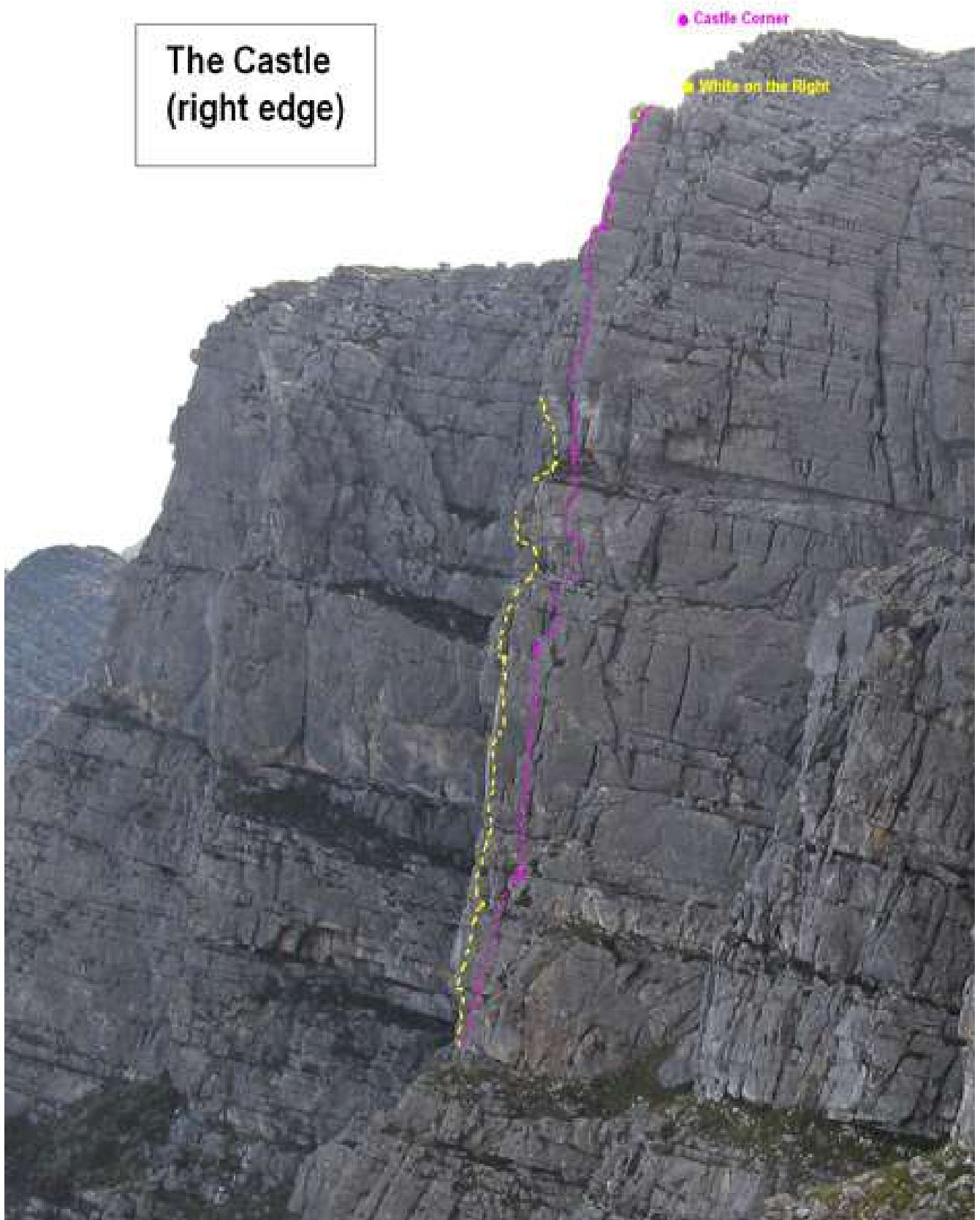
Pitch 4: 40m, 18. Pull up a sloping crack on the far right hand side of the roof, just left of the big chossy gully (this is the crux and is easier than it looks), continue climbing up this crack for about 15m until it starts petering out (below a small roof). Move left a metre or so (old peg), up a few metres on edges and then back right into a continuation of the crack. Follow this and successive cracks until you get to a narrow band with two cracks in it, take right crack and up to another blank-looking band of rock (about 3 metres high) which offers no gear. Climb the left-ward trending ramp up onto this band and belay about 5m below a crack in a big gnarly face.

Pitch 5: 30m, 14. Climb up the crack and gnarly face to a ledge on big blocks with a cairn. From here scramble up and out.

Climbed by Robert Zipplies, Ian Durbach & Galeo Saintz; January 2010.

THE CASTLE RIGHT EDGE

The Castle
(right edge)



WHITE ON THE RIGHT 180M 19 ****

START: Walk along the ledge at the base of the Castle to the right hand corner. The route starts up the obvious rib right of an off-width crack with a chock stone in it. Castle Corner starts on the face a meter or two to the right.

Pitch 1: 30m. 17. Ascend the juggy wall, tending slightly right until you reach the roof. Move left a couple of meters until it is possible to pull through the roof on jugs and climb to stance below large blocks.

Pitch 2: 48m. 18 (one move). The Sublime Crack pitch. Climb up over a series of blocks for 15m until you find yourself at the base of an open book. Climb up this and then diagonally right for a few moves, before moving up and left into the base of the Sublime Crack. Climb the crack until it peters out and then head right around the edge and up an exposed jug-infested face to a narrow ledge. A stunning pitch.

Pitch 3: 42m. 17. Above you is a chimney. Climb the right hand wall on huge jugs for 5m, and then traverse left, stepping across the chimney and onto a dinosaur-back ridge. Climb the ridge and then easy ground until you find yourself on a good ledge. To the left of a deep crack is an exposed little platform. Traverse to this, then up to the left for 15m on easy ground to a wide grassy ledge. Scramble up to the far left corner of the ledge.

Pitch 4: 30m. 19. Above and to the left is a pair of parallel cracks (with yellow edges) cutting through an overhanging bulge. Head up to and through these until able to move left onto a wildly exposed face. Traverse delicately to the left corner and then up to a square, sloping ledge. An exciting pitch.

Pitch 5: 50m. 16. Step up and right to climb a series of immaculate faces and cracks to the top. This can be easily broken into two pitches.

FA: Rik De Decker, Roy White, Andy Wood; 29 May 2010.

CASTLE CORNER 180M 18 ***

START: Walk along the bottom of the lower buttress to the right hand corner past some huge blocks. 5m around the corner is a wide crack just before the continuous band of overhangs. This climb remains in the shade for most of the day.

Pitch 1: 45m, 16. Climb up just left of Peapod crack. Pull through a roof to the right. Head up the gully to the right for 15m to a stance underneath an overhanging nose.

Pitch 2: 45m, 15. Climb up to the left then move right onto the nose and follow giggle jugs straight up for 45m.

Pitch 3: 35m, 18. Climb up to the right onto a scoop. At top of scoop move left delicately left for a couple of meters. Move up over rounded bulge on rounded holds to a big ledge.

Pitch 4: 50m, 15. In the middle of the ledge is an obvious crack system with a large chimney to the right. Climb the cracks and face above keeping just to the right of the edge.

Pitch 5: 35, 13. Climb the wall just right of ridge. Follow your nose to top.

FA: Fiona McIntosh, Roy White; 21 March 2010.

THE KNIGHT

This chess piece is the second biggest tower to the right from Smalblaar Ridge and is split into three portions by small gullies. The route starts roughly in the centre of the middle section (see large cairn).

Pitch1: 90 feet 'E inf.' (15): Traverse in from the left along a ledge to a point where there is an obvious break in the bulge. Climb through the bulge and continue up to a handrail. Traverse to the right for 10 feet before climbing to a stance below the overhang.

Pitch 2 90 feet 'E inf.' (15): Traverse to the right past a chimney to reach the base of an easy recess. Most of the dassie-crawling can be avoided by using footholds on the face below. Climb the recess and then follow an obvious traverse to the left to a small stance.

Pitch: 3 70 feet 'E sup.' (14): Traverse left below overhangs to gain bushy ledge.

Pitch 4 30 feet 'E inf.': 12 Climb the ramp that slopes up to the right.

Pitch 5 90 feet 'F inf.' (15) : Traverse out left, using a jug handle grip on the left-hand side of the small overhang to reach a crack. Climb the face above, pitted with jug grips, moving slightly to the left at the top to gain stance.

Pitch 6: 100 feet 'E': 14 Traverse back to the right to the base of a chimney. Ascend the chimney to a stance (use the exit on the left-hand wall).

Pitch 7: 90 feet 'E sup.' 14: Start up a chimney and traverse out to the right on to the face for 20 feet. Climb up a crack in the face to a stance. A further 15 feet of scrambling to another ledge could be included in this pitch.

Pitch 8: 60 feet 'F inf.': 15 Climb the left-hand wall of a shallow chimney which narrows higher up, and then exit on to the face on the left. Ascend the face, which is cut by a few cracks, to reach the stance. A further 80 feet of scrambling leads to the summit.

FA: G. Mosely and A. Killick – 1967.

ROOK'S PAWN E inf.

The route climbs the smallest of the **Chess Pieces** immediately to the right and at the same level as **The Castle**

Pitch 1: 90 feet 'E inf.': Step off some large blocks on to a face and then step out to the left on to a rib. Climb this rib for some way before moving back to the right and continuing up to a ledge. Traverse 30 feet to the left.

Pitch 2: 50 feet 'E': Climb a face with mushroom grips. Move to the right near the top.

Pitch 3: 40 feet 'E': The pitch lies above and slightly to the right. Climb the short undercut face moving to the right to where it culminates in a knife-edge. Climb the knife-edge to a stance.

Pitch4: 60 feet 'D': Climb up a bushy ramp to a stance at the base of a large chimney.

Pitch 5: 30 feet 'E': Descending slightly, traverse to the left to a small stance beneath a flat face.

Pitch6: 50 feet 'F inf.': Stepping off a point, move up on small holds for 10 feet. Move to the right into a crack, and then climb a face to the right of the crack. Climb up a knife-edge to a cubbyhole stance. Scramble through a hole in the roof and continue up the face on the right (10 feet 'D') to a large ledge.

The most prominent feature of the next section of the buttress is a large chimney. Proceed to the base of it.

Pitch 6: 70 feet 'F': Start up a grassy crack. The first difficulty is encountered 20 feet up where the crack narrows to about 6 inches. A sequence of two difficult moves takes one from the crack into a peculiar wormhole which leads to a stance.

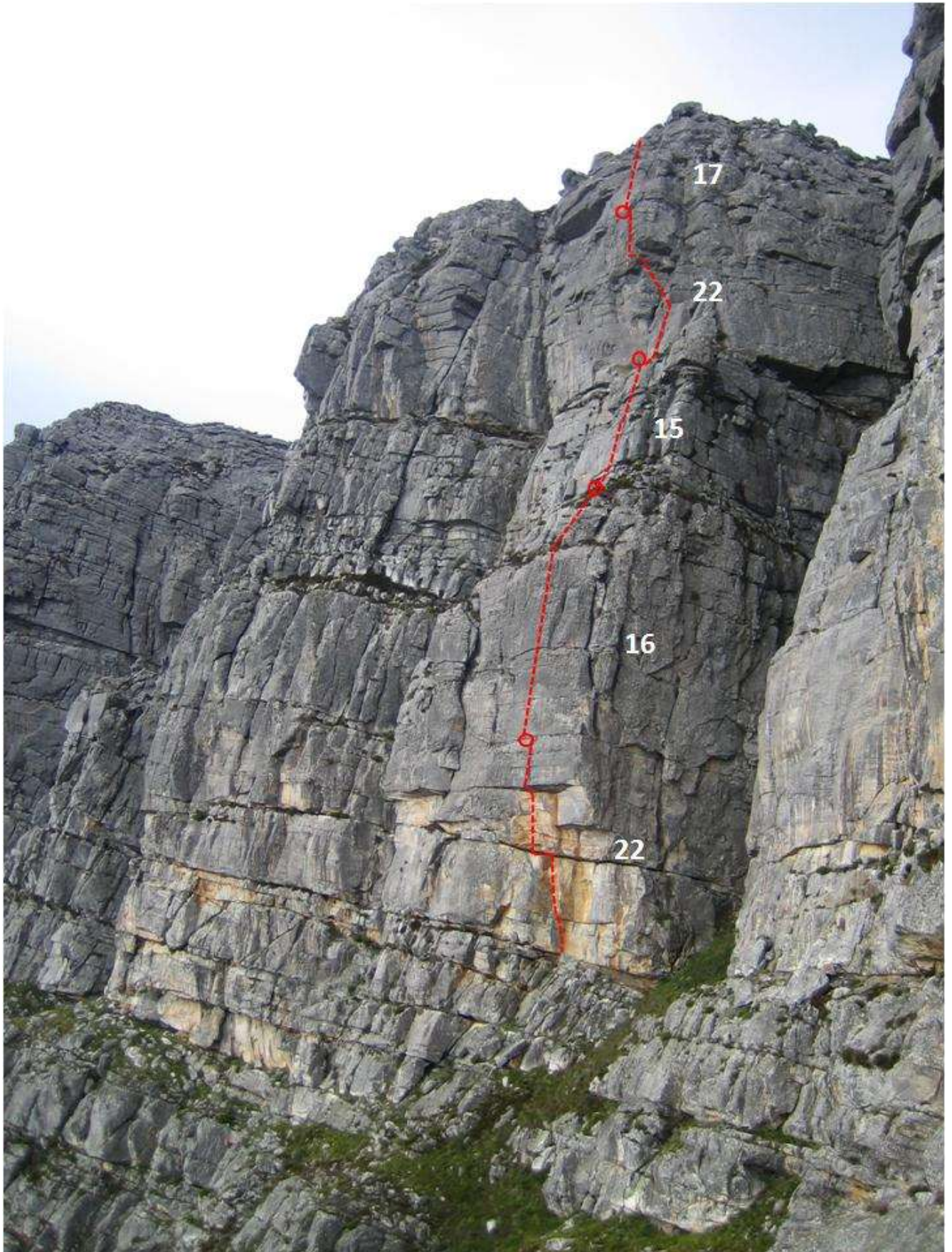
Pitch 7: 35 feet 'D': Chimney up above the stance, moving to the right into another cleft which leads to a large stance.

Pitch9: 100 feet 'E': Climb a very broken-up rib. Step out to the left and then continue to climb diagonally to the left across the face. Continue almost straight up to a very large platform.

We avoided the top band of rock by climbing a further 100 feet of 'D' grade in a recess to the right of the final section.

FA: G. Moseley and A. M. Killick. – 1967.

KNIGHT RIDER 22



Start: On the far right of the Knight, (2nd last buttress on the chess-pieces) there is a scoop of compact orange rock beneath a 3m roof at 25m height. Start on a higher ledge at the left-hand side of this where the orange rock meets grey.

Pitch 1: 22: 40m: Start up two orange recesses, a step left and then straight up compact orange rock, past an unnerving grey flake to the roof and the apparently off-width crack that breaks the roof. Power through this, then cruise 10m up the giggle-jug-crack to stance on the boat-anchors on the left.

Pitch 2: 35m 16: Straight up the steepest (vertical), dappled wall on a stellar pattern of seams and juglets. Eases off after 10m. Stance at the back of a fairly big ledge.

Pitch 3: 25m 15: Straight up the 8m, 20cm-wide crack on ears, laybacks and juglets. Continue straight. Upon gaining the ledge move 6m left.

Pitch 4: 30m 22: Up an easy crack system (the right of two) to the roof system just inside the right-hand corner of the buttress. Left, then straight through the first dark overhang: a long stretch on some under-cling crimps leads to good rails, and left into the twin cracks that break the roof. Establish an exposed position on two ledgelets, then heel-hook, jam and crank! Continue up to a stance.

Pitch 5: 20m 17: About 7m left of the right-hand skyline. (Should be 1m left of stance) Start on a pedestal, past a good rail to some thin moves (delicate) and to the summit.

FA: Richard. Halsey and Anthony. Hall (Feb 2011)

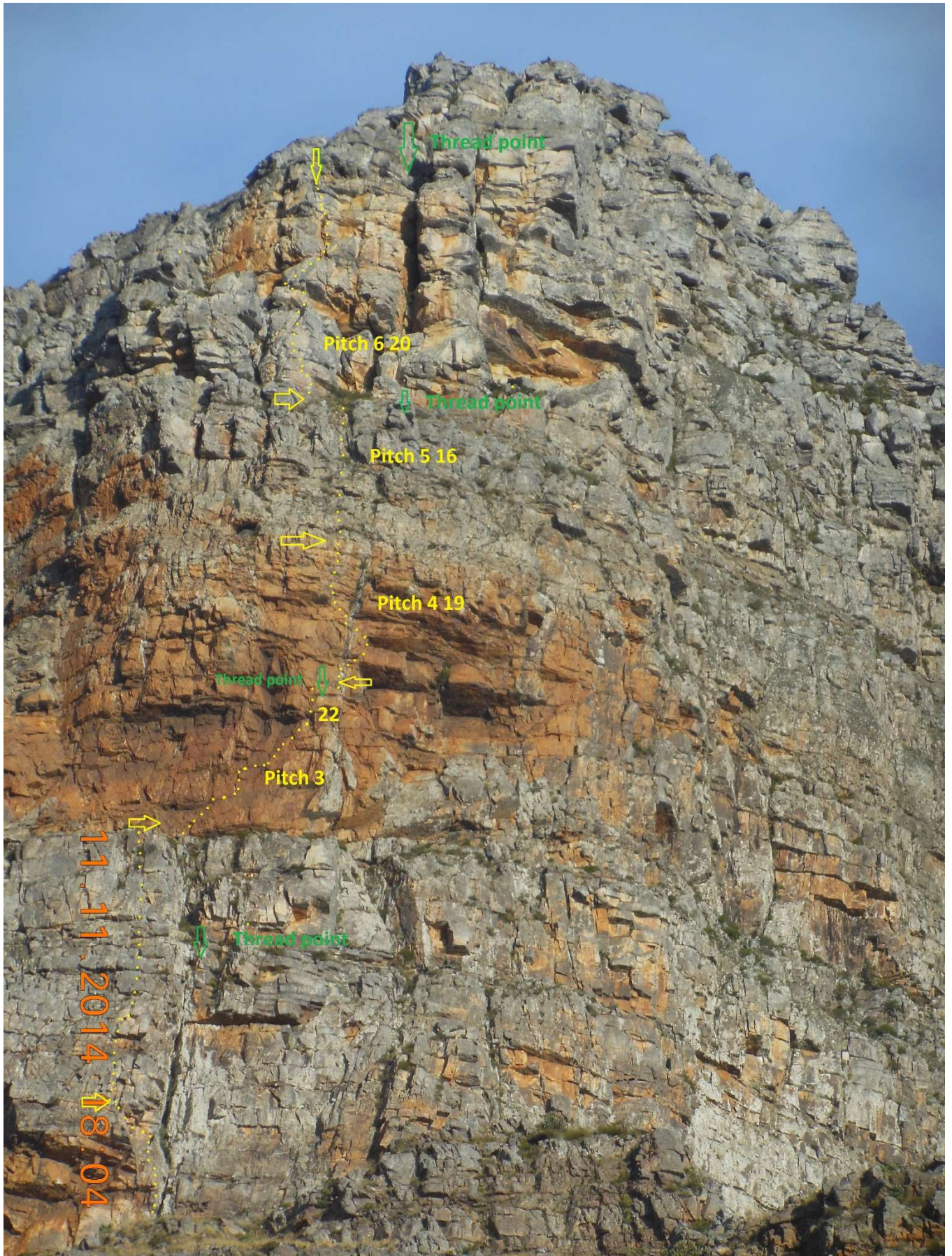
DESCENT: The gully to the left of the Castle or walk over to Timerity.



When you see this skyline, you know you're in the right spot!

Knight Rider pitch 1 & 2

MASQUERADE 22 160m 22



Masquerade is a full on classic country route and a good day out. The quality of the rock and the pro is excellent but it has not yet been “climbed into condition”.

It is not a 5 star Krakadouw or Tafelberg route but it is certainly worth 4 stars in the context of the Du Toits' Kloof area. It is easily done in a day from Cape Town.

There are no really hard moves and the crux on the 22 pitch is protected by a high "top-rope" cam.

It is a route that one can climb all year round and in November it is shady till midday. If you leave Cape Town early enough you could probably do the whole route before the sun gets to you as it is light by 05h15 to start walking from November to February.

It is likely to dry quickly after rain within in a day or two as it is steep.

There is no trail to the base so the walk involves typical fynbos fun.

The best way to get there is probably to start directly below the face from the road, then continue up the gulley for about 30-40 minutes and then scramble up the ridge on the right. No rope is needed.

Approach.

Masquerade buttress is 1 hour drive from Cape Town City located in Du Toit's Kloof on the south side of the N1 about a km or so from Yellowwood ravine. After travelling through the Huguenot toll tunnel, travel past the Du Toit's Kloof lodge and continue for about 5 km and look up to the right to see the buttress.

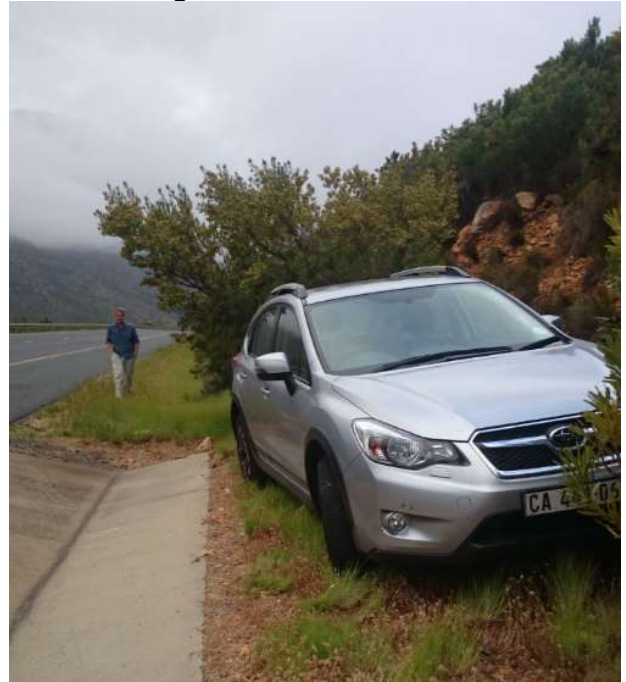
It is very obvious with a red feature in the middle of the face that looks like Zoro's Mask.



Continue until the highway becomes single carriage. Carefully make a U-Turn and after about 3 km slow down till you see this sign:



Continue 100m or so to park off the highway just as the concrete drainage channel starts directly below the pilon that is visible about 150m up the slope on the left. You can get your vehicle completely off the road and well hidden behind a large bush:



Walk down the highway for about 500m until you see a gully heading up to the base of the face. Continue up the gully finding the best way through the fynbos and then scramble up the right ridge to the start of the climb. (2 hours with gear).

Start: on the left of the obvious fault that splits the face.

Pitch 1: 20m 21. Start up small rock pillars just to the left of the fault. Follow the photo topo on your smart phone. The crux is a steep lay back but you can cheat by stepping right into the fault, climbing up a bit and then traversing back left. Head left up the left sloping ramp to a stance

Pitch 2: 50m 17 Find your way up clean grey rock to the jumbo ledge at the base of the red eyes.

Pitch 3: 25m 22. This is the plum pitch and diagonals its way to the crux which is protected by a very comfy cam above your head. Stance on a ledge to the right below the right "nostril". You will pass a thread abseil point just before the stance.

Tony about to do the crux on pitch 3. Bruce following below.



Pitch 4: 20m 19 Step up and the head up right to climb airily up the right side of the left nostril. Then traverse back left over the bridge of the nose to stance more or less above the previous stance on the right eyebrow.

Pitch 5: 16 30m Find your way on clean rock to a large ledge.

Pitch 6: 40m 20 Climb the clean grey “Krakadouw rock” face on crimps to easier ground. Continue until you have to a hard crank up the undercut block or cheat around to the left. Climb the recess to the ledge system.

Descent.

Find a thread with a biner about 20m to the right. Abseil 42m past the bushy ledge to a grey pillar and find another thread in situ.

With 60m ropes you should reach the large ledge below but there is no abseil point on it at present. With 50m ropes and with the first one to descend using one or two directionals abseil diagonally left to the thread at the stance at the start of pitch 4.

Abseil past the next big ledge about 35m and find the last thread.



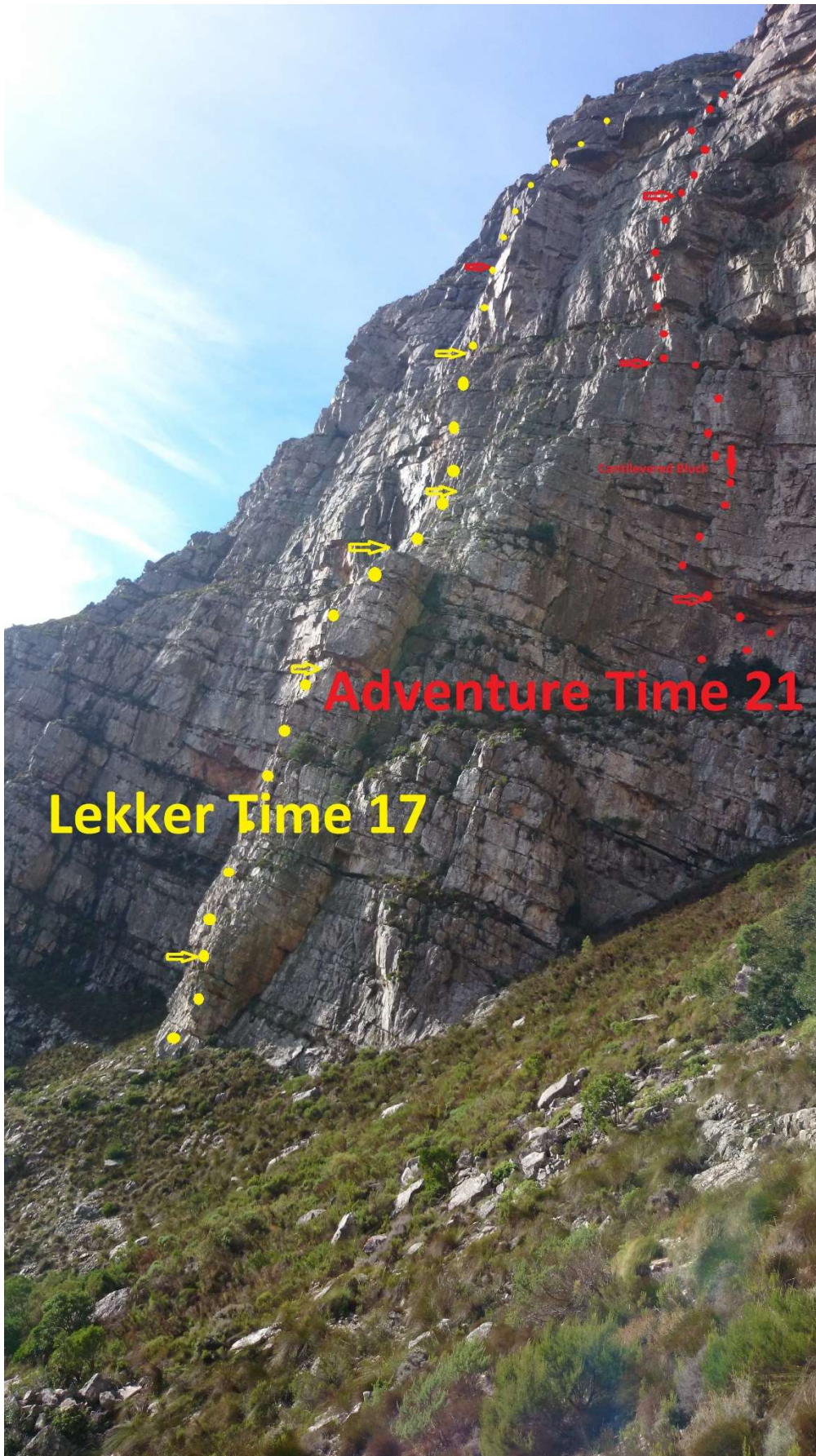
Tony on pitch 4 climbing up the right side of the left “nostril”.

Be careful abseiling.

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein, Tony Dick and Bruce Daniel 11 November 2014

ADDITIONAL PHOTO TOPOS

LEKKER TIME AND ADVENTURE TIME PROFILE PHOTO TOPO



DU TOIT'S KLOOF

RIGHTEOUS CONDEMNATION 200m, 24 A3

Approach: Park off the side of the N1 freeway at the Rawsonville turn off. Park next to a gate with Eskom signage.

Walk or cycle one or two kilometres along the flat track that doubles back up the Du Toits Kloof valley towards an Eskom mast. Reach a point where big power lines cross the track. A hundred metres or so further find a 1m-high rock wall a little upslope of the track. Bushes behind the wall are a great place to leave bicycles. From this point head up the slope angling to the left to intersect a small, dry river bed. After walking up the river bed for about 30 minutes you get your first view of the rock face up a side-valley to the right. Leave the river bed to the right and head up the steep slope directly towards the big face, else better still, scramble the dry water course to the right of the steep slope until high up then leave it and go up to the left to the rock face. Important note: this water course heads up and rightwards into a nek between the main face and a big buttress that shields it from the car park. It is this water course that is the descent route, so this is a handy place to leave stuff (water, food, etc) to be collected on the way down.



Start: The route starts directly below the biggest, most over-hanging part of the face. The lower 40% of the wall is vertical grey rock. Above that it is fearsome dark brown in the centre, while left and right of it the rock is bright orange. The route climbs through the brown rock. At the base of

the wall find some nice trees where the face starts off with five to ten metres of overhanging orange rock. The route starts towards the right end of the steep orange bit of wall and is marked by a cairn.

Pitch 1 20m 22:

Get off the ground at the cairn and climb up to the obvious rail 4m up. Head right for a couple of metres then up onto grey rock. Continue up, trending slightly left, to a roof with cascading creepers. Stance on a ledge to the left of the creepers.

Pitch 2 20m 18:

From the left of the ledge head directly up until reaching a big ledge to stance. Find a single rap-line bolt 4m above the ledge.

Pitch 3 40m 19:

Walk a few metres to the right then climb up to the break that goes through the small roof 6m up. Once over the break do an easy 30m traverse to the left to a point where you can see a small tree in the dihedral above.

Pitch 4 25m 19:

Climb up easily to the tree then pass it to the left. Traverse right and clamber over the tree. Climb the very aesthetic hand crack above to reach the big Breakfast Ledge.

Pitch 5 20m 20:

At the back of the Breakfast Ledge climb the excellent crack straight up, then a metre or two to the right to bypass a roof, then straight up again to a huge roof. While pressed up against the huge roof, awkwardly traverse to the right for 5m to reach a decent stance supplemented with a bolt (This is a rap-line leading to another bolt 50m straight down – the one above the second pitch).

Pitch 6 30m 22 A3:

Down a big bottle of brave, with a splash of commitment added, to take on the huge Roof Pitch. Stretch out to a piton, then a bolt, then make some difficult aid moves on cams to reach another bolt. Down a bigger bottle of brave and commit to free-climbing. Make a couple of moves on the face to the right then take the steeper line to the left that has some reasonable hidden holds. Get established above the overhanging stuff then head up and right to some good rails. Head up and right up an obvious fault line using the arête on its right to reach a small ledge with a stance on the right.

Pitch 7 25m 24:

The Spikes Pitch – it only gets wilder. From the stance climb up a few metres then right to the obvious crack through the steep bulge to get to the spikes. Without pulling on the tempting spikes, get over the bulge and head up to the roof. Traverse right to get around the roof then step back across above it. Climb up slightly leftwards to get into a recess capped by a roof. Climb directly through and above the little roof cap, then a few metres to the left to reach a stance.

Pitch 8 40m 23:

Now for the toughest pitch – the Bat Pitch. Climb up to the big roof then rail right to get around it. Pull hard and high to a non-returnable lay-away. Climb up to the left to reach a cave-like

overhang. Move left and balance up. Step out airily and up a steep arête. Go up and left through an overhanging break to get onto a big grassy ledge with a stance at the back.

Pitch 9 25m 15:

Scramble up the obvious easy gully to stance on the summit.

Descent: Walk right trending downwards for a few hundred metres following big beacons. Then straight down a shallow rocky valley for a few hundred metres following beacons until reaching the nek between the main part of the mountain and the big protruding buttress (as mentioned in the Approach). Turn right into the nek and down the other side towards the wall. Follow beacons down the steep slope between waboom trees until a point where it is necessary to traverse right into the watercourse and across it to the slope on the other side. Go down the slope for 40m then back into the watercourse and continue down to your water stash then return the way you came.

First ascent: Guy Paterson-Jones and Hilton Davies, 22 February 2015.

